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LEAD STORIES

Russia Trade Debate Ramps Up in Washington as Human Rights Legislation Moves Forward

Legislation that would sanction Russian officials for alleged human rights violations is moving swiftly through the US Congress, with a Senate panel unanimously approving its version of the bill on Tuesday. The potential linkage of the human rights bill with legislation that would remove Cold War-era trade restrictions on Moscow has sparked major debate among US lawmakers, particularly amid the backdrop of Russia's impending WTO accession and warnings of retaliation from Moscow should the human rights measure become law.

Magnitsky momentum builds as trade hearings continue

The US trade restrictions at issue, known as the Jackson-Vanik amendment, deny most-favoured nation (MFN) status to countries with limited freedom of emigration. While Russia has been granted waivers from the amendment since the early 1990s for being in compliance with the law, some fear that leaving the original restrictions in place could put US exporters at a serious disadvantage to their foreign counterparts, who unlike the US would immediately enjoy the benefits of Moscow's membership in the global trade body.

However, the process of granting Moscow permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) has been complicated by growing concerns over human rights protections in Russia.

Some lawmakers have argued against removing Jackson-Vanik entirely, on the grounds that this would take away Washington's leverage in

responding to concerns over human rights in Russia.

Others have suggested that the repeal of Jackson-Vanik be linked with a bill that would target Russian officials who commit human rights violations, including those suspected of involvement in death of anti-corruption lawyer Sergei Magnitsky in a Russian jail in 2009.

The human rights legislation – known as the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act – has quickly drawn support in both chambers of Congress, having now successfully passed both the House Foreign Affairs and Senate Foreign Relations committees. However, the legislation still needs formal approval from both the full House and Senate, as well as the US President, before it can become law.

“We do not pretend that terminating Jackson-Vanik and having Russia as a WTO member will resolve all of our differences with Russia,” US Trade Representative Ron Kirk told the House Ways and Means Committee during a hearing last Wednesday. “But maintaining the application of Jackson-Vanik to Russia offers no leverage with Russia over areas of disagreement.”

The US trade chief has openly argued against linking the trade and human rights bills, which acknowledging that the latter issue will need to be addressed in Congress in some form.

Senator Max Baucus, a Democrat who has championed the repeal of the Cold War-era legislation in his chamber, took a different tone regarding the relationship between the trade and human rights legislation during a hearing in the Senate Finance Committee the following day.

“By keeping the focus on US jobs, I am by no means suggesting we ignore the host of difficult issues we face with Russia,” Baucus said. “We must address the human rights, democracy, and foreign policy concerns,” he continued, reiterating his promise to support the Magnitsky legislation and add it to the PNTR bill when the trade legislation is marked up in the committee.

Even those that are not in favour of linking the human rights and trade bills, such as Kevin Brady

– a Republican who chairs the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade – have lately acknowledged that such a move might be inevitable. “I would prefer them not to be linked myself, but clearly at the end of the day if the will of the House and the Senate is to pass the Magnitsky bill, then it will be necessary,” Brady told Congressional newspaper The Hill earlier this week.

For its part, the Russian Foreign Ministry has warned of retaliation should the Magnitsky bill become law, a response that US officials have cautioned against.

“I’ve heard from several Russian counterparts their concern about the Magnitsky legislation,” Miriam Sapiro, Deputy USTR, said on Friday. “I certainly hope that if Magnitsky were to pass, that there would not be such measures.”

US lawmakers raise questions on Syria, WTO rules compliance

Concerns over Russia’s relationship with the embattled regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad have also been raised repeatedly by US lawmakers during the last several weeks, particularly following the news that Russian-made attack helicopters were being sold to the Syrian government.

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Republican from the US state of Florida who chairs the House Foreign Affairs Committee, has advocated strongly against granting PNTR to Moscow given Russia’s foreign policy. “In light of Russia’s policy in Syria, the Obama Administration’s string of concessions to Moscow must stop, including the latest effort to repeal the Jackson-Vanik amendment to give Russia preferential trade benefits,” she said earlier this month.

However, several high-profile administration officials and lawmakers – including Secretary of State Clinton, Republican Senator John McCain, and Senator Baucus – have said that the Syria question should be dealt with separately from PNTR.

Meanwhile, various lawmakers have also raised questions over whether Russia will indeed comply

with its WTO obligations once its membership in the global trade body is formalised. To that end, four Democratic senators have introduced legislation that would, if passed require the USTR to conduct annual reporting of whether Russia is upholding its WTO accession commitments, with the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees having the option to request enforcement action should the Obama Administration not do so on its own.

“This bill is a common-sense measure to help ensure accountability,” said Sherrod Brown, one of the senators who introduced the bill. “We must make sure that Russia – and any country that makes commitments to earn greater trade facilitation – does not renege at the detriment to American workers, ranchers, and producers.”

Russian Constitutional Court asked to review accession package

Back in Moscow, Russia’s WTO accession protocol was forwarded to the State Duma earlier this month, in what is set to be one of the final steps in a process that was launched in 1993. The accord must be ratified by 23 July in order to avoid restarting the accession negotiations at the global trade body.

Though expected to pass, the ratification process in Moscow did hit a roadblock last week, after 131 Duma deputies sent a request on Wednesday to the Constitutional Court asking that it examine the accession protocol’s compatibility with the country’s constitution. The letter cited irregularities in the approval process and concerns that the procedures for ratifying treaties were not followed appropriately, according to Russian media.

Among the signatories of the request was Russian Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov, who has argued strongly against his country joining the global trade body. “Our country is totally unprepared for WTO entry and is doing so on unfavourable terms,” he said in a letter earlier this month.

“The main sectors of the economy are in no shape to compete on foreign markets and other

industries do not make products that are in demand,” Zyuganov continued.

According to Russian media, the Constitutional Court is not yet sure whether it will consider the deputies’ request.

ICTSD reporting; “U.S. Warns Russia Not to Retaliate Over Human-Rights Sanctions,” BLOOMBERG BUSINESSWEEK, 22 June 2012; “Business groups see progress in moving Russia trade bill,” THE HILL, 24 June 2012; “Duma Deputies Appeal to Constitutional Court Over WTO Accession,” MOSCOW TIMES, 20 June 2012; “Russia’s WTO Entry ‘Threatens National Security’- Zyuganov,” RIA NOVOSTI, 15 June 2012; “Senate panel backs ‘Magnitsky’ sanctions on Russia,” REUTERS, 26 June 2012.

OTHER NEWS

US, EU Move Closer Toward Possible Trade Talks

The possibility of a Brussels-Washington trade and investment pact received new momentum last week, following the release of an EU-US report which found that a broad, comprehensive bilateral deal was the option with “greatest potential” for supporting jobs and spurring economic growth on both sides of the Atlantic.

The report was prepared by the EU-US High Level Working Group on Jobs and Growth, which was tasked by Washington and Brussels last November to explore trade and investment expansion within the world’s largest trading partnership as both sides seek to remedy their ailing economies. (See Bridges Weekly, 30 November 2011) This interim report is a precursor to a final recommendation that will be forwarded to US and EU leaders later this year.

The report outlined a series of areas where Washington and Brussels could likely find convergence; however, it noted that other subjects would require additional substantive work before the working group could make a more definitive

recommendation regarding whether the two sides should ultimately pursue a bilateral deal.

The report was welcomed by US and EU leaders, who acknowledged that such an initiative could be key to strengthening growth and creating jobs. “A strong outcome can enhance not only transatlantic economic ties, but also address shared market access challenges in third countries and encourage a forward-looking multilateral trade liberalisation agenda,” US President Barack Obama, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, and European Council President Herman Van Rompuy said in a joint statement.

“We are now entering the last leg of mapping out how we should tackle any eventual negotiation to boost growth and jobs through our trade partnership,” EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht said last week.

Though the US-EU trade partnership already exceeds US\$500 billion annually, the US Chamber of Commerce estimates that reducing trans-Atlantic trade barriers could increase annual trade volume by up to US\$120 billion.

Tariffs, IPRs, regulatory issues

Provided that both sides do decide to pursue a bilateral deal, the report suggested that negotiators aim to eliminate all duties on bilateral trade, starting with a large elimination of tariffs on some tariff lines upon the pact’s entry into force, and phasing out all but the “most sensitive” tariffs within a short time frame.

Negotiators should also work to develop a set of “21st century rules” focusing on areas such as trade facilitation and customs; trade-related aspects of competition and state-owned enterprises; trade-related aspects of labour and environment; small- and medium-sized enterprises; supply chains; and access to raw materials and energy, the report said.

In the area of services, both sides would aim to “bind the existing autonomous level of liberalisation of both parties at the highest level of liberalisation captured in existing FTAs,” while at the same time working to address remaining

market access barriers and taking into account the sensitive nature of some sectors.

With regards to intellectual property rights (IPRs), both sides “agree[d] that it would not be feasible in negotiations to seek to reconcile across the board differences in the IPR obligations that each typically includes in its comprehensive trade agreements.”

“Before the launch of any negotiations, both sides would further consult on possible approaches to deal with IPR matters in a mutually satisfactory manner,” the report said.

Washington and Brussels have examined options for lowering trade barriers between them in the past, only to find difficulty in achieving consensus in areas such as regulatory standards and health protections. These issues were also addressed in the report, which noted that a potential deal could include ambitious chapters that would be “SPS-plus” – SPS referring to sanitary and phytosanitary standards, or food safety and animal and plant health – and “TBT-plus,” with TBT referring to technical barriers to trade.

In both areas, the two sides could establish bilateral forums for greater dialogue and co-operation on these subjects, along with taking other measures to ensure regulatory compatibility, coherence, and transparency, the report suggested.

Increased political momentum, amid differences in rhetoric

The possibility of a US-EU free trade deal has received public backing from European national leaders in recent months. Speaking in Davos, Switzerland, earlier this year, UK Prime Minister David Cameron expressed support for bilateral negotiations, a stance that he repeated during last week’s G-20 Leaders’ Summit, while German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said the US and EU “have a lot of possibility to achieve a free trade zone.”

Obama has also indicated Washington’s interest in potentially pursuing such a deal. “Even as we build this new framework for trade in the Asia Pacific [with the Trans-Pacific Partnership talks], we’re also working to expand our trade with

Europe,” Obama said at last week’s G-20 summit. The US President noted that the interim report is the “next step” in Washington’s and Brussels’ work “towards the possible launching of negotiations on an agreement to strengthen our already very deep trade and investment relationship.”

Recently, however, top US and EU trade officials have offered differing views on what improved trade ties could mean. Last month, EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht stressed that any US-EU trade agreement must be “both ambitious and realistic,” addressing a comprehensive array of trade and investment. (See Bridges Weekly, 16 May 2012) Negotiations for such an agreement should begin early next year, De Gucht said, and be completed by mid-2014.

Meanwhile, De Gucht’s counterpart, US Trade Representative Ron Kirk, has suggested a more “pragmatic” focus. While noting the potential opportunities that could spring from clinching a comprehensive trade agreement, Kirk cautioned against an all-or-nothing approach to the talks, noting that smaller deals could indeed be an option should an overarching deal appear out of reach.

“We are hopeful this could be a unique opportunity to address some of these historic issues that in the past have seemed to stand in the way ... (but) if we can’t do that, then we think it’s imperative that we take a pragmatic approach to seeing what we can accomplish,” Kirk told reporters in London on 22 May. (See Bridges Weekly, 23 May 2012)

ICTSD reporting; “EU Seeks U.S. Trade Agreement by Mid-2014, De Gucht Says,” BLOOMBERG, 11 May 2012; “Broad U.S.-EU Trade Agreement Ties to Growth, Trade Chief Says,” BLOOMBERG, 22 May 2012; “EU, US inch towards trade deal,” EURACTIV, 21 June 2012; “Crisis leads to push for a transatlantic trade deal,” EUROPEAN VOICE, 6 May 2012; “U.S. trade chief says to be “pragmatic” on EU deal,” REUTERS, 22 May 2012; “UPDATE: EU’s Tajani: Hopeful Can Sign Trade Agreement With US By Early 2014,” WALL STREET JOURNAL, 11 May 2012; “UK’s Cameron urges EU to look beyond Doha,” REUTERS, 26 Jan 2012.

Critical Voices Drown Out Official Outcome in Rio

Following months of informal negotiations and amid lowered expectations, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, or Rio+20) drew to a close on 22 June, with the common sentiment at the end of the event’s high-level segment being one of a wasted chance. The result drew a critical response from many non-governmental organisations, who particularly stressed the opportunity costs associated with organising such a large and expensive meeting at a time when “multilateralism is in crisis,” as some put it.

The UNCSD high-level segment of the event was expected to feature few surprises, with the Rio outcome document – entitled “The Future We Want” – having been adopted at the level of technical negotiations just prior the 20-22 June Conference, despite frustration by some over the weakened language that was ultimately included in order for delegates to reach common ground. (See Bridges Weekly, 20 June 2012).

The final outcome text sparked a strong response from NGOs, which released a counter statement during the UN summit on why the text as it stands lays the groundwork for “The Future We Don’t Want.” Endorsed by more than 1,000 NGOs and individuals in just one day, the NGO representative at the high-level plenary on 20 June asked for the phrase “with the full participation of civil society” removed.

“It would be a shame and a waste for you to only come here and sign off a document,” the NGO representative told heads of state directly. “We urge you to create new political will that would make us stand and applaud you as our true leaders.”

In terms of specific missed opportunities, NGOs pointed to the lack of action on phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, controlling the high seas, improving women’s reproductive health, and mitigating conflict and disasters such as the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan.

Speaking at a press conference on 21 June, Gro Harlem Brundtland was similarly critical of the final Rio outcome document. The former Norwegian prime minister – who played a key role in the creation of the landmark environmental report *Our Common Future* and was informally known as one of the “elders” of sustainable development at Rio+20 – said the document in no way recognises planetary boundaries, tipping points, or the Earth’s carrying capacity.

“The Rio+20 declaration does not do enough to set humanity on a sustainable path,” she criticised.

By the last day of the meeting, there was a strong sense of participants losing steam. Delegates milled about the hallways of the Riocentro venue and many left ahead of time, in stark contrast to the frenetic talks going into overtime, for example, in Durban in 2011 and at other major environmental negotiations. Ultimately, heads of state and governments mainly read out prepared statements and did not reopen the outcome document, which was adopted in the form it was forwarded from the technical negotiations.

Civil society responds

In the weeks leading up to the conference, many organisations as well as governments reportedly cut their delegations, in part due to concerns over soaring costs in Rio, and also due to their low expectations with regard to the outcome.

Nonetheless, NGOs had a strong presence in town, particularly at the *Cúpula dos Povos*, or People’s Summit, which ran for the full length of the meetings and attempted to capture the voices not formally participating in the process at the official event. Competition between food, fuel, land and biodiversity were recurring themes at the grassroots summit, where several civil society groups – despite their frustration at the Rio outcome – adopted an approach on the way forward through a global citizen’s movement in the form of People’s Sustainability Treaties.

In addition to addressing the plenary and participating in the People’s Summit, NGOs staged many peaceful protests both at the suburban Riocentro negotiating venue and in the centre of Rio de Janeiro itself. While the strong

presence of the Brazilian army and police force gave peace of mind to conference attendees concerned about safety, many complained that it added a feeling of heaviness to the events.

The uncertain road ahead

Despite the widespread disappointment over the lack of commitment demonstrated by the final outcome document, there are a number of coalitions that are already looking to the future and seeing what opportunities can be gleaned from the Rio+20 process.

Trying to look to the positives, Matthew Gianni of the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition said that Rio+20 had done much to keep the need for marine protection in the political and public consciousness alive.

“Hopefully, we will be able to use that to push – in force – for some real changes over the next coming months and years,” Gianni said, adding that his organisation would not be disheartened by the outcome in Brazil. Many others – including government representatives – took a similarly pragmatic approach, looking for the elements of opportunity provided in the outcome document.

Who will take the driver’s seat?

Some observers were quick to suggest that if governments are unable or unwilling to take the lead on sustainable development, progressive businesses will have to take up the challenge. They argue that there are many diverse bottom-up approaches for sustainability – such as public-private partnerships and multi-stakeholder forums – that offer a more constructive path forward than playing the blame-game.

In a similar vein, Corporate Social Responsibility was debated at length in Rio, including at many well-staged events organised by the private sector. However, bringing the discussion back full circle, many businesses called for a stable regulatory framework and a carbon price in order to be able to operate in a more predictable marketplace and to mobilise their best efforts.

Given this mixed framework on the road ahead, governments remain tasked with bringing action

from the outcome document forward. Chief among these are the negotiations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which, among other items in the outcome document, have been pushed forward to the 68th UN General Assembly in October 2013. Numerous other actions are also pegged to be carried out at the national level, according to domestic circumstances.

ICTSD reporting.

Farm Policy: European Parliament, Council in CAP Reform Tug-of-War

European farm ministers and parliamentarians have locked horns during the past weeks over agricultural reform proposals in two separate meetings that are set to shape the future of Europe's post-2013 farm policy.

Parliamentarians meeting on 18 and 19 June debated new proposals on direct payments to farmers that were recently unveiled by rapporteurs from the body's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (COMAGRI), along with other issues. (See Bridges Weekly, [13 June 2012](#)) Simultaneously, farm ministers in the European Council reviewed plans for the rural development dimension of the bloc's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), alongside the Danish presidency's [report](#) on the reform process to date.

"After several months of debate, Parliament's proposals have been tabled for a modern and flexible Common Agricultural Policy to make farmers' lives easier and cut red tape," [said](#) COMAGRI chair Paolo de Castro.

"We will be on schedule with the reform only if Parliament and the Council engage in a dialogue on the proposals presented today," he told the meeting.

Tug-of-war

The parliamentary committee's rapporteur on direct payments, Portuguese MEP Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos, unveiled plans to ease requirements for farmers to maintain permanent

grassland, diversify their crops, and protect 'ecological focus areas' in order to receive a new 'green' payment under the EU's reformed Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

The new plans would also reduce inequalities in payments received by farmers in different parts of the EU, the rapporteur claimed.

"We need to reduce those differences and the process needs to be speeded up," [said](#) Capoulas Santos, who is with the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats group in the parliament.

However, the proposals appear to be the subject of a 'tug-of-war' in the committee between different political parties over the future of EU farm policy.

The plans were criticised by French MEP Michel Dantin, who [claimed](#) that in some EU countries a "rapid reduction of support would lead to closure of farms." Dantin – who is also the rapporteur on the single Common Market Organisation – is with the conservative European People's Party.

French Green MEP José Bové also slammed the reform proposals in a [statement](#). "The legislative reports on CAP reform presented this week would weaken already unambitious proposals from the Commission," said Bové, warning that the new proposals "contributed nothing to addressing some of the key problems which lead to the currently wasteful CAP subsidising intensive agriculture and unsustainable farming practices."

Cap on large farms "unfair"

Other MEPs critiqued Capoulas Santos' plans to cap payments to large farms. The rapporteur had proposed that subsidy payments that are less than €300,000 but more than €250,000 should be cut by eighty percent – rather than the seventy percent originally proposed by the Commission.

The move was "unfair," [said](#) George Lyon, a Scottish MEP who is with the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe.

Meanwhile, MEPs from countries that joined the EU in 2003 argued that the new plans should rectify the current imbalance in the payments

received by farmers in ‘older’ and ‘newer’ EU member states.

The proposals from Capoulas Santos take a small step in this direction, but for many MEPs they do not go far enough.

“Less unfair means still unfair,” [argued](#) Polish MEP Janusz Wojciechowski, who is with the European Conservatives and Reformists Group.

Farm ministers split

European farm ministers meeting in parallel with the parliamentary committee were [split](#) over a proposed guideline from the European Commission that national governments spend a minimum of 25 percent of each rural development programme’s agro-environment funds on climate change mitigation and adaptation, and on land management.

Some ministers strongly opposed the new guidelines, while others welcomed the proposal and suggested it should be a binding obligation for all members. Some even suggested that the threshold be pushed up to 50 percent.

The Danish presidency also presented its [report](#) on the progress of the CAP reform, which emphasised the need for increased flexibility, simplification and greening.

Farm ministers at the meeting reportedly viewed the Presidency’s amendments as a step in the right direction – towards the promotion of more flexible yet cost effective ‘greening’ measures. However, important details still require further negotiation – including final decisions on budgets, and on the flexibility of greening measures.

Export subsidies in the spotlight

Green agriculture spokesperson Martin Hausling said in a [statement](#) that “there is a need to go further and explicitly end distorting export subsidies.” The measures, which have been controversial with the EU’s trading partners in talks at the World Trade Organization, “result in the dumping of EU farm products onto fragile markets in developing countries,” Hausling added.

In a separate move, the European Parliament’s development committee voted to approve an [opinion](#) by its rapporteur, Birgit Schnieper-Jastram, that called for export subsidies to be phased out.

Laust Leth Gregersen, from development NGO network Concord Denmark, welcomed the move. “Export refunds harm the potential of farmers in developing countries,” he said.

“It marks a real turning point that the Development Committee has voted to push for phasing out of these damaging aspects of the CAP,” added Gregersen.

Farmers, environmentalists react

Reacting to the proposals from Capoulas Santos, EU farm lobby COPA-COGECA criticised its support for Commission plans to impose uniform environmental requirements on farmers across the 27-country bloc as a condition for receiving the new ‘green’ component of direct payments.

“This “one-size-fits-all’ approach is not the best way to obtain environmental benefits,” the group said in comments emailed to Bridges.

Environmental groups were also sharply critical of the plans. Ariel Brunner, head of EU Policy at Birdlife Europe, [warned](#) that “if the Council and the Parliament follow on the path laid out by those two documents, they will be sending a clear message to the EU’s finance ministers: the CAP will remain a waste of money.”

ICTSD reporting.

Doha Impasse Casts Shadow over Informal Farm Trade Talks

Informal talks on how best to implement existing farm trade rules made slow progress last week, officials said, in the absence of a broader momentum to conclude the Doha Round of negotiations at the WTO.

The meetings, which were held in the margins of the global trade body’s regular Committee on

Agriculture, were an attempt to improve understanding of current disciplines on farm trade, agreed almost two decades ago at the end of the Uruguay Round.

But the gloomy outlook for Doha cast a shadow over the discussions, sources said, as delegates shied away from discussing any issue that could be linked with negotiations.

Trade ministers declared that the Doha talks are in an ‘impasse’ when they met last December (see Bridges Daily Update 4, [18 December 2011](#)) – prompting fears that other WTO functions could be harmed as well.

“You can see how much oxygen the negotiating function gives the WTO,” one delegate told Bridges glumly.

Export restrictions: “massive debate”

However, others took heart from the very fact that informal talks took place last week.

One told Bridges that a “constructive discussion” had taken place on the rules covering how governments should report agricultural export restrictions to the WTO, and on consulting with trading partners before introducing new measures.

Japan – which first initiated the informal talks some months ago – had “gone out of its way” to delink the issue from the Doha negotiations, one trade official said.

Last Monday’s discussions focused on a [clause](#) of the Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture that requires governments to consider how export bans or restrictions on foodstuffs could affect food security in other countries, and to inform the WTO Committee on Agriculture.

“There were two camps,” one delegate told Bridges. Some countries, including Japan, favoured an interpretation of “foodstuffs” that covers feed and seeds, while others preferred a narrower definition.

Egypt argued that a definition of “basic foodstuffs” already [exists](#) at the WTO, which

should at a minimum be covered by the disciplines.

Delegates also reviewed rules on the timing of countries’ notifications to the WTO, and discussed clauses that exempt developing countries from having to report measures to the global trade body unless they are net food exporters of the specific foodstuff concerned.

“Then there was a massive debate on where we should go next, and no one could agree,” another delegate told Bridges.

Some resisted suggestions that the process could lead to revised guidelines for WTO members on how to notify export restrictions, arguing instead that the discussion could lead to “better notification practices.”

Market price support: members butt heads

Talks over how best to measure market price support – first initiated informally by the US about nine months ago – ran into questions over procedure, as some countries questioned the need for further discussions.

“China, India, and Pakistan don’t think we need to talk about this,” one official told Bridges bluntly. The source added that countries use different methodologies to notify their support levels because they “have their own understanding” of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture.

The US has emphasised that discussions would only cover the interpretation of existing rules, and be based on data already notified to the WTO. However, one delegate observed that larger developing countries might perceive the initiative as targeting them in particular.

A [study](#) published last September by a US law firm looked at developing country farm support calculations and contributed towards spurring discussion on the topic.

The US has signalled that it is willing to discuss market price support under the auspices of the Committee on Agriculture, as part of a broader review of domestic support issues if needed. Although opponents have argued that there is

insufficient agreement for the issue to be discussed in the committee, others have said countries do not need consensus before raising items for discussion.

“Sliver of hope”

Countries could find a “sliver of hope” in the long-running talks on the list of significant exporters that are required to notify exports to the WTO so that trading partners can monitor the possible use of export subsidies, one developed country official told Bridges.

A new “non-paper” tabled by five developing countries – China, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Turkey – could help breathe new life into the discussions, the official said.

Informal talks have sought to explore ways to update the country list, which was originally established in 1995 – although these discussions have again become bogged down in controversy.

The non-paper argues that WTO members need to update not just the country list and base years, but also the products covered – which the co-sponsors argue should include ethanol, among other things.

Spectre of paralysis

Trade negotiators told Bridges that, without positive engagement among WTO members, they feared that the institution could be overcome by paralysis.

“No movement is possible, nobody is willing to engage,” sighed one delegate, adding that “it’s almost as if people are daring each other to engage in disputes.”

“We’ve got into the very bad habit of saying ‘no’ to everything,” concurred another.

While the WTO’s dispute settlement function could in theory be strengthened by a protracted negotiating stalemate, as countries seek to resolve issues through the institution’s legal process, delegates warned that it could be heavily strained if a large number of disputes were brought at

once. (For more on agriculture disputes at the WTO, see the related [story](#) in this issue.)

“Some of the legitimacy of the WTO comes from its negotiating function, its agenda for tomorrow’s world,” one observed.

The outgoing Norwegian chair of the Committee on Agriculture, Jonas Skei, echoed these concerns in his farewell remarks last Wednesday.

Members should “spend less time on discussing legal provisions and more time discussing members’ policies; less time on trying to define what the secretariat and the chair may or may not do, and more time on the real concerns between members,” he told the committee.

Emalene Marcus-Burnett of Barbados took over as the new committee chair at the meeting.

ICTSD reporting.

EU International Trade Committee Casts Negative Vote on Anti- Counterfeiting Pact

In a key vote last Thursday, the EU Committee on International Trade (INTA) officially recommended that the European Parliament (EP) reject the controversial Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA). The highly-anticipated result has cast further doubts over the ultimate approval of the treaty by the EU.

ACTA is a plurilateral trade pact seeking to strengthen global standards for the enforcement of intellectual property rights in order to combat counterfeiting and piracy. The deal’s opponents fear that some of the provisions contained in the final text, which go beyond the standards set by the WTO’s Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), could have a detrimental effect on access to medicines and freedoms in the digital environment.

During the vote, INTA – the main EP committee discussing the anti-counterfeiting deal – had to decide whether to adopt a report by the

committee's ACTA rapporteur, British Member of the European Parliament (MEP) David Martin.

Martin's draft report had urged the EP to withhold its consent to the treaty due to the pact's ambiguous definition of "commercial-scale" counterfeiting and online piracy, the role of internet service providers, and the possible seizures of in-transit generic medicines. (See Bridges Weekly, 2 May 2012)

INTA backed Martin's document with 19 votes in favour, with 12 voting against.

"I welcome the result of today's vote. I am pleased that the committee has acknowledged the problems I have identified in my report and has followed my recommendation to reject ACTA," Martin said after the vote.

"This was not an anti-intellectual property vote. This group believes Europe does have to protect its intellectual property but ACTA was too vague a document," Martin added.

INTA is the fifth EU committee to ask for the rejection of the pact. Within the past month, four other committees issued critical opinions of the treaty, arguing that the deal is incompatible with EU fundamental rights and could have negative impacts on business and on the health of people living in developing countries. (See Bridges Weekly, 6 June 2012)

Move to delay vote blocked

INTA also rejected an amendment to the report that would have postponed the full Parliament's vote until the European Court of Justice (ECJ) – the EU's highest Court – rules on the treaty's compatibility with current European laws. The European Commission had announced in February that it would be referring the pact to the ECJ to assess its compatibility with the 27-country bloc's fundamental rights and freedoms; the issuing of the ruling is expected to take up to a year. (See Bridges Weekly, 22 February 2012)

Speaking to the trade committee a day prior to their vote, EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht urged MEPs to vote in favour of the delay

and reaffirmed his stance regarding the potential benefits of ACTA for the EU economy.

"As I have said before, ACTA is not an attack on our liberties, it is a defence of our livelihoods," De Gucht argued.

"You may decide that the European Parliament should rush to condemnation of this agreement... but on an issue of the correct interpretation of fundamental rights, you may prefer to hear the authoritative view of the Court of Justice," he concluded.

According to De Gucht, even if the EP does vote against the anti-counterfeiting pact before the EU court issues its ruling, the Commission will still pursue an ECJ decision on the treaty's compatibility with existing EU law.

In addition, should the court find that ACTA is indeed in line with EU law, De Gucht said, he could again seek the EP's consent to the deal in the future.

Mixed response from civil society

The INTA vote drew a mixed response from civil society groups, with those in favour of the decision praising the committee for "[saying] yes to democracy and fundamental rights."

"The way is now paved for a quick and total rejection of ACTA by the European Parliament," said Jérémie Zimmermann, spokesperson of the citizen advocacy group La Quadrature du Net.

However, a coalition of organisations in the creative industry called the outcome "a disappointment to Europe's creative, innovative and manufacturing sectors."

If the European Parliament rejects ACTA, "it will send a negative signal to Europe's trading partners and to investors around the globe, especially since much of the debate to date has been fuelled by unfounded rumour and misinformation," said Jeffrey Hardy, Director of the International Chamber of Commerce's Business Action to Stop Counterfeiting and Piracy initiative.

The European Parliament is expected to take a final decision on ACTA in July.

ICTSD reporting; “Acta set to fail after Europe’s trade committee votes against it,” THE GUARDIAN, 21 June 2012; “European trade committee votes to reject piracy treaty,” BBC, 21 June 2012.

US Senate Passes Farm Bill

Just weeks after formally opening debate on the omnibus legislation that will drive US agriculture spending over the next five years, the US Senate passed its version of US Farm Bill by a 64-35 vote last Thursday.

The Senate’s version of the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012 – which passed with bipartisan support after lawmakers debated 73 amendments over a period of three days, out of the 200-plus that were originally proposed – is projected to cost US\$969 billion over the next ten years. Compared with the existing 2008 Farm Bill, it will reduce spending by US\$23.6 billion over the same period, according to recent estimates from the Congressional Budget Office.

According to Mary Kay Thatcher of the American Farm Bureau Federation – an advocate of farm interests – the US\$23.6 billion in savings comes from US\$15 billion in cuts from the US\$45 billion commodity subsidy programme; US\$5 billion in cuts from the US\$64 billion conservation programme; and a US\$3.8 billion cut on the US\$770 billion tab on food stamps, also known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The major difference between the 2008 Farm Bill and the Senate’s proposed 2012 version is the termination of direct payments and counter-cyclical payments under the commodity title. Farmers will instead receive support through a crop and revenue insurance mechanism that will cover “shallow” losses, protecting farmer’s incomes up to 80-90 percent.

The Environmental Working Group – a long-time critic of what it deems to be wasteful spending in

the US Farm Bill – has called this a ‘bait and switch’ that continues the system of subsidising wealthy farmers with taxpayer dollars.

Supporters of the bill, however, have argued otherwise. The bill includes an amendment that places a US\$50,000 limit on revenue compensation, thereby ending the unlimited payments entailed in the 2008 law; it also reduces premium subsidies for farmers earning more than US\$750,000 a year. However, effective limits on revenue compensation, while attempted in past years, have yet to make it into final legislation.

Additionally, the Senate version requires farmers to practice risk management and soil and water conservation in order to qualify for insurance. The new crop insurance programme has the potential to be more trade-distorting than direct payments, thereby putting US farm payments in WTO’s “amber box” category of subsidies. Direct payments, considered minimally trade-distorting, are currently notified as “green box” payments and are not subject to limits.

The Senate bill still includes the Stacked Income Protection Plan (STAX) proposal, as tabled by the National Cotton Council. While some US lawmakers have included STAX in the Farm Bill as an effort toward resolving the long-running *United States – Upland Cotton* dispute with Brazil, Brazilian officials have said that they do not view it as a legitimate remedy. (See Bridges Weekly, 3 May 2012)

Remaining hurdles to final passage

Before it can take effect, a similar bill must also emerge from the House Agriculture Committee and then be reconciled with the Senate version before being put up for a vote in both chambers. The bill will then require presidential approval to be enacted into law.

The House is expected to propose cutting another US\$10 billion overall from its version of the agriculture legislation; oppose spending on food stamps; and include higher price supports to farmers – a system that the Senate wants to end.

The House Agriculture Committee has announced that it will begin working on a House bill in mid-

July. Congress will then be in recess from the first week of August until mid-September, by which time the presidential election season will be in full gear – giving lawmakers scarce time to complete the process before the 30 September deadline.

However, lawmakers from the opposing parties have historically managed to find consensus on farm spending, even at the last minute. For example, the 2008 Farm Bill was vetoed by then-President George W. Bush, only to be overridden by both chambers of Congress and then passed into law.

ICTSD reporting; “Senate OKs Huge Farm Bill, Puts House GOP on Spot,” SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, 22 June 2012; “Senate Overhauls Farm Bill, but Time is Running Out,” REUTERS, 21 June 2012.

Argentina, Indonesia Import Policies in the Spotlight at Goods Council

Argentina and Indonesia’s respective import policies took centre stage at Friday’s meeting of the WTO’s Council on Trade in Goods, with the US among the group of members that openly criticised these measures. Meanwhile, Buenos Aires and Jakarta raised their own concerns over a Spanish measure regarding biodiesel imports, which was enacted shortly following Argentina’s controversial expropriation of the Madrid-owned Repsol YPF oil company.

US takes aim at Buenos Aires, Jakarta import curbs

At the meeting, the US reiterated earlier concerns over Argentina’s import licensing procedures, arguing that Buenos Aires has enacted new policies and reinforced existing ones since the last Goods Council gathering in March, rather than removing any of these measures. (See Bridges Weekly, [4 April 2012](#))

“Our hope is that Argentina will acknowledge our concerns and terminate these import-restrictive measures and practices immediately,” US attaché

Rachel Bae said at the meeting, in comments reported by Reuters.

Buenos Aires’ import policies have increasingly drawn attention from its trading partners in recent months, with the EU launching dispute settlement proceedings in May over these measures. At the Goods Council meeting, Japan said it will be joining the consultations between Brussels and Buenos Aires on the subject.

Similar concerns were also raised by Australia, Chinese Taipei, Colombia, Hong Kong, Israel, Malaysia, New Zealand, Switzerland, and Turkey, trade sources said.

In response, Buenos Aires argued that its measures are indeed consistent with WTO rules, and criticised the group for singling out one member for its trade policies.

The US also questioned Jakarta’s trade policies during the Friday gathering, noting import licensing requirements on products such as livestock, textiles and apparel, electronics, household appliances, and food and beverages.

Disguised pre-shipment inspection requirements and local content requirements - including in the energy sector – were also cause for concern, the US representative said. Similar comments were reportedly made by the EU, Japan, Korea, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.

Indonesia, for its part, argued that its trade policies are needed to address the needs of millions of poor people within its borders, sources said. However, it added, Jakarta is reviewing some of these policies, and has postponed the implementation of some of these measures.

Spanish biodiesel measure questioned

The EU, meanwhile, came under fire during the meeting over a Spanish measure that effectively restricts biodiesel imports from non-EU countries, which Madrid had enacted following Buenos Aires’ decision to nationalise the Argentine-based operations of the Repsol YPF oil company.

Madrid had announced on 20 April that it would be offering incentives to prioritise the use of

Spanish and EU biodiesel in response to Buenos Aires' expropriation of Repsol YPF, a move that was expected to reduce imports of biodiesel from Argentina – the world's leading supplier of soyoil and soy-based biodiesel. Currently 70 percent of Spanish biodiesel is imported, 90 percent of which comes from Argentina and Indonesia.

In a joint statement on Friday, Argentina and Indonesia criticised the Spanish measure as unjustified discrimination against imports, arguing that the policy violates the national treatment principle of the WTO's General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and has an adverse impact on developing countries' ability to participate in global production chains.

This statement was supported by Uruguay and Cuba, sources told Bridges; Brazil, for its part, said the matter deserved further examination.

"This measure, of an overall protectionist character, has the objective of displacing Argentina and other biodiesel providers in the Spanish market and violates WTO rules," the Argentine Foreign Ministry said earlier this month.

Buenos Aires is currently evaluating whether or not to lodge a complaint at the global trade arbiter, the ministry has said, despite earlier statements from Argentine officials saying that they would not be challenging the measure.

However, the EU argued that Madrid's policy is in line with Brussels' renewable energy objectives, and does not prevent Spain from importing biodiesel from Argentina or other trading partners.

ICTSD reporting; "Spain targets Argentine biodiesel in YPF reprisal," REUTERS, 20 April 2012; "U.S. raps Argentina, Indonesia import curbs at WTO," REUTERS, 22 June 2012.

IN BRIEF

WIPO Members Sign Treaty Protecting Audiovisual Performances

After twelve years of discussion, members of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) successfully finalised a new treaty on Tuesday in Beijing aimed at providing copyright protection for performers of audiovisual works.

The Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances is the first international copyright treaty concluded under the auspices of the organisation since 1996, when members signed the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT), a deal that updated international standards of protection for sound performances but excluded audiovisual performances.

According to WIPO, the new treaty would "strengthen the precarious position of performers in the audiovisual industry by providing a clearer international legal framework for their protection." It would also – for the first time – give performers protection in the digital environment, WIPO said in a release at the outset of the negotiations.

"The conclusion of the Beijing Treaty is an important milestone toward closing the gap in the international rights system for audiovisual performers and reflects the collaborative nature of the multilateral process," WIPO Director General Francis Gurry said after the negotiations.

"The international copyright framework will no longer discriminate against one set of performers," Gurry added.

Scope of treaty

The main breakthrough in the negotiations was achieved last year, when members agreed on a previously contentious provision concerning the transfer of rights from performers of audiovisual works – such as film actors – to producers. (See Bridges Weekly, 29 June 2011) In 2000, a WIPO diplomatic conference on the subject was

suspended due to disagreements on the issue of transfer of rights. (See Bridges Weekly, [7 December 2011](#))

The treaty now gives its parties the choice between an automatic transfer of rights to producers once a performer has agreed to have their performances recorded, or to make this transfer subject to the performer's consent.

It will also permit performers to potentially share in the proceeds that currently go to producers, and allow performers to object to any modification of their performances should they be "prejudicial to [their] reputation."

Other benefits for performers include the exclusive right of authorising the direct or indirect reproduction of their performances, even in the digital environment, and the exclusive right to authorise the distribution, rental, and broadcasting of their performances.

Importantly, the new treaty also allows contracting parties to "provide for the same kinds of limitations or exceptions with regard to the protection of performers as they provide for, in their national legislation, in connection with the protection of copyright in literary and artistic works."

Governments, industry groups welcome agreement

The deal was welcomed by government officials and industry groups alike, with EU Commissioner for Internal Market and Services Michel Barnier [noting](#) that "actors are ambassadors for cultural expression and exchange."

"They have to be able to earn their living from their artistic contribution, because without the means to express themselves, no cultural expression would be possible," Barnier continued.

"The Beijing Treaty strengthens the position of film and television performers by providing a clear, international framework for protection of their IP rights," David Kappos, Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) [commented](#). "This is critical as

audiovisual works are increasingly promoted in a digital environment."

International Federation of Actors President Agnete Haaland [took](#) a similar stance, noting that the treaty "will make a clear difference in the lives of performers by helping us to get paid for use of our work, and give us more control over our image and performance."

The treaty will enter into force once it has been ratified by 30 contracting parties.

ICTSD reporting.

Disputes Roundup: Poultry Rows Move Forward at WTO

Agriculture disputes were a recurring theme at the global trade arbiter this past week, with a panel establishment in the US-India row over poultry products and Brazil's challenge of South African anti-dumping duties on chicken.

Brazil files complaint on South African duties on poultry

Brazil and South Africa are set to face off at the WTO, after Brasilia lodged a complaint last Thursday regarding Pretoria's imposition of anti-dumping duties for Brazilian poultry products ([DS439](#)).

In its request for consultations – the first stage in the dispute settlement process – Brasilia argues that the anti-dumping duties are founded on insufficient evidence of dumping, and that there is no causal link between the imports and potential injuries for South Africa's industry. As a consequence, the duties violate the WTO's agreement on anti-dumping duties, Brazil claims.

In February, Pretoria had [imposed](#) provisional anti-dumping duties on frozen chicken products coming from Brazil, its main agriculture trading partner, on the grounds that these imports were causing harm to the industry in the South African Customs Union. (See Bridges Africa, [17 February 2012](#)) All whole frozen chickens coming from the Latin American partner were subjected to an

additional 63 percent duty, while additional duties ranging from 6 to 47 percent were imposed on boneless cuts.

The row has already put industry groups in the two countries at odds with one another, with both sides arguing that their respective poultry sectors are being put at risk.

“This unjustified antidumping duty is bad for the processing industry which uses the Brazilian products and creates jobs in South Africa and for the consumer, who is already suffering higher prices,” said Francisco Turra, Executive President of the Brazilian Poultry Association (UBABEF), in an emailed statement.

According to UBABEF, a positive WTO ruling could reverse US\$70 million in annual losses to the Brazilian industry.

The South African Poultry Association, however, stands behind their government’s dumping determination, arguing that the Brazilian complaint could be an attempt to discourage other trading partners from also imposing such duties. “Brazil [is] afraid bigger trading partners may institute similar action or use the South African example as a reference,” the industry group’s CEO Kevin Lovell said in a statement to Business Day.

If consultations fail to settle the dispute within sixty days, Brazil may request the establishment of a panel.

Panel established in US-India spat

In a separate row involving poultry, the US’ second request for a panel was automatically granted on Monday in its dispute concerning India’s prohibition on US poultry, eggs, and other agricultural products (DS430). Washington first requested a panel in May, after having initiated consultations with New Delhi in March. (See Bridges Weekly, 30 May 2012 and 7 March 2012)

“Unfortunately, the government of India did not lift its unwarranted restrictions on US poultry after with the US at the WTO in Geneva,” the National Chicken Council, National Turkey Federation, and

USA Poultry & Egg Export Council said in a joint statement.

“However, we are pleased that [the Office of the US Trade Representative] is taking the next step. We support the dispute settlement process moving forward as soon as possible with the formation of this panel.”

ICTSD reporting; “Feathers fly in fowl spat as Brazil takes SA to WTO,” BUSINESSDAY, 25 June 2012.

China Defends Rare Earths Export Restrictions

Last week, China publicly rejected assertions that the country’s export controls on rare earth elements were designed to protect local industry. At a press conference in Beijing, Su Bo, the country’s vice-minister of industry and information technology, insisted that the export curbs have been placed to protect the environment and are in line with WTO rules.

In March, the US, EU, and Japan filed WTO complaints against China, claiming that export quotas on 17 rare earths – minerals used to produce goods such as, hybrid cars, weapons, and mobile phones – were in violation of its commitments at the global trade body. (See Bridges Weekly, 14 March 2012) Holding photos of landscapes decimated by the rare earths extraction process, Su rejected accusations that protection of the environment was an excuse to limit rare earth supplies to foreign competitors.

“The government is strengthening the management of the industry to protect the environment and resources, which is beneficial for the sustainable development of the industry and totally conforms to WTO regulations,” Su said. “The protection of the environment is never a pretext for gaining advantage or increasing economic returns.”

Mining rare earth minerals is widely known as being damaging to the environment. Beijing says that in order to help minimise the environmental impact, it has implemented a range of policies,

including production caps, export quotas, stricter emission standards, and higher resource taxes. The US, EU, and Japan, however, assert that export restrictions increase rare earth prices for foreign companies and give Chinese buyers and high tech manufacturers an unfair advantage.

Brussels says that China's quotas are not the most effective way to help protect the environment and suggests that Beijing look for alternate approaches that do not negatively impact foreign industries.

"The EU supports and encourages all countries to promote an environmentally friendly and sustainable production of raw materials. However, the EU believes that export restrictions do not contribute to this aim," the EU said in a 13 March statement.

While China holds some 30 percent of the world's rare earth deposits, it accounts for more than 90 percent of production. The US, Canada, Australia, and other countries have rare earth deposits but stopped mining in the 1990s due to lower cost ores provided by China as a consequence of lower environmental requirements in the Asian country. Recently, Su stated that other countries with rare earth resources should help contribute to the global supply.

The first step of the WTO dispute process was initiated on 25 April when the US, EU and Japan requested consultations over the matter at the WTO. The complainants have recently requested a panel, which is likely to be established before the end of July. In February this year the WTO's Appellate Body sided with the US and EU in a similar case, rejecting China's export restriction system on certain raw materials as WTO incompatible.

ICTSD reporting; "China defends rare earths curbs as environmental measure, rejects WTO complaints by US, Europe," WASHINGTON POST, 20 June 2012; "China morning round-up: Warning on rare earths reserves," BBC NEWS, 21 June 2012; "China issues white paper on rare earth," CHINA DAILY, 20 June 2012.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events

Coming soon

28 June, Geneva, Switzerland. CONNECTING TO COMPETE 2012: TRADE LOGISTICS IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY. This event will feature the presentation of the Logistics Performance Index (LPI), a global benchmark for measuring logistics performance in international trade. The LPI – a joint venture of the World Bank, logistics service providers, and academics – allows national leaders, policymakers, and private sector traders to identify key logistics challenges and opportunities to improve performance. This event features welcome remarks from Richard Eglin, Director of the WTO's Trade Policies Review Division, and a presentation from Bernard Hoekman, the Director of the World Bank's International Trade Department. For more information and to register, please click [here](#).

28 June, Washington, US. ARAB SUMMER: WHAT'S NEXT IN TRADE IN EGYPT AND THE MIDDLE EAST? Sponsored by the Washington International Trade Association (WITA), this event will examine the current and future prospects of trade in the Middle East and Egypt. Panellists will provide an update on the commercial and trade policy prospects in the entire Middle Eastern region, along with a special focus on the outcome of the Egyptian elections in the context of Egypt's trade, investment, and commercial policies, and the possibility of an Egyptian free trade agreement with the US. To register, please contact Jackeline Galvez at events@wita.org, or visit the event [website](#) for more information.

28 June, Geneva, Switzerland. LAD AT 30 – THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LEGAL AFFAIRS DIVISION (LAD). To mark the 30th anniversary of its inception, the WTO Legal Affairs Division is hosting a conference featuring previous LAD directors and other keynote speakers. The conference includes remarks from WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy and a tribute to Professor John Jackson for his contributions to the field of international trade law. To register,

please contact ladat30@wto.org, or visit the event [website](#) for more information.

3-5 July, Geneva, Switzerland. UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD): TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD, 55TH EXECUTIVE SESSION. The 55th Executive Session of UNCTAD's Trade and Development Board will focus on UNCTAD's activities in support of development in Africa. The session will feature a report providing an overview of research and analysis being undertaken by UNCTAD in this field, as well as a summary of specific activities, including advisory services and technical co-operation in each sector that falls under UNCTAD's mandate. Included on the agenda is a panel entitled "The New Partnership for Africa's Development: Performance, challenges, and the role of UNCTAD," followed by an interactive discussion. For more information, contact meetings@unctad.org or click [here](#).

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted [here](#). Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of the different bodies. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, and are open to WTO Members and accredited observers only.

28 June: Sub-Committee on Least-Developed Countries

28 June: Working Group on Trade and Transfer of Technology

29 June: 17th Round of the Director General's Consultative Framework Mechanism on Cotton – Cotton Development Assistance

29 June: Council for Trade in Services

2+4 July: Trade Policy Review Body – Côte d'Ivoire/Guinea Bissau/Togo

Other Upcoming Events

10 July, Geneva, Switzerland. LAUNCH OF THE INVESTMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (IPFSD). This event, hosted jointly by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), will feature the launch of UNCTAD's Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development, which will also form the main theme of the World Investment Report being launched on 5 July. The IPFSD publication aims to inform national and international policymakers on how best to design investment policies that support sustainable development, how to ensure the integration of investment policy with development strategy, and how to improve policy effectiveness. The event is open to the general public. To learn more, or to register, please contact Farazally.Rojid@unctad.org or visit the event [website](#).

11 July, Geneva, Switzerland. WTO NEGOTIATIONS: CONCLUDING THE DOHA ROUND AND POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES. This lecture, organised by the Graduate Institute's Summer Programme on the WTO, International Trade and Development in collaboration with the Centre for Trade and Economic Integration, will focus on the ongoing Doha Round of trade talks at the WTO. Featured speakers will include Stuart Harbinson, former Senior Adviser to the WTO Director-General; Nicholas Niggli, Counsellor, Deputy Head of the WTO Division at Mission of Switzerland to the WTO and EFTA; David Shark, US Deputy Chief of Mission to the WTO; Manuel A.J. Teehankee, former Philippine Permanent Representative to the WTO in Geneva and the former Chairman of the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment Special Session. The talk will be moderated by Gerard Depayre, a consultant at Trade Strategies. For more information, or to register, please visit the event [website](#).

17-21 September, The Hague, Netherlands. ADVANCED WTO TRAINING PROGRAMME ON 'RECENT TRENDS AND EMERGING ISSUES'. This training programme, hosted by the T.M.C. Asser Instituut, is designed for diplomats and trade lawyers. Through this

event, organisers aim to provide participants with the knowledge, insights, and practical skills that will enable them to implement WTO rules and to engage in its dispute settlement procedures. For information on the programme and to register, please visit the event [website](#).

24-26 September, Geneva, Switzerland. WTO PUBLIC FORUM 2012. Convening under the theme “Is multilateralism in crisis?”, the Public Forum is the WTO’s largest annual outreach event. It aims to provide a platform for participants to discuss the latest developments in world trade and to propose ways of enhancing the multilateral trading system. The event regularly attracts over 1,500 representatives from civil society, academia, business, the media, governments, parliamentarians, and intergovernmental organisations. Event organisers are currently inviting submissions of short articles of no more than 1,000 words on the themes of the Forum, along with views on the articles submitted by others. Articles should be sent to publicforum2012@wto.org, indicating discussion forum on the subject line. For more details about this event, visit the WTO’s [website](#).

5-6 November, New Delhi, India. SEVENTH IZA/WORLD BANK CONFERENCE: EMPLOYMENT AND DEVELOPMENT. Since 2006, the annual conference on Employment and Development has aimed to provide a platform for researchers and policy experts to discuss new findings and identify areas where further work is needed. The Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) and the World Bank will organise this year’s conference in partnership with the Indian Council for Research and International Economic Relations (ICRIER) and the Delhi School of Economics. In addition to the regular sessions in all fields of labour economics, special sessions on Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship – the theme of the AfDB-OECD-UNDP-UNECA 2012 *African Economic Outlook* – will be featured. More information is available on the IZA [website](#).

Resources

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT WITHIN THE MAJOR AGRICULTURAL TRADING NATIONS. By Jean-Pierre Butault, Jean-Christophe Bureau, Heinz-Peter Witzke, and Thomas Heckebei for the European Parliament’s Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (May 2012). This study compares agricultural policies in the US, EU, China, and other major agricultural trading nations, examining varying levels and types of government support for agriculture and how differences in intended aims of agricultural subsidies can affect trade. To access the publication, please click [here](#).

US ELECTION NOTE: INTERNATIONAL TRADE POLICY AFTER 2012. By Joseph K. Hurd III for the Chatham House (June 2012). This paper analyses trade in the context of the 2012 US presidential election, and predicts what US trade policy might look like after 2012. The author argues that in January 2013, the new administration will likely address issues such as job creation, free trade agreements (FTAs), trade promotion authority (TPA, also called ‘fast track’ authority), and the trade deficit. Exogenous factors such as the unemployment rate, which party controls Congress, and the global economic climate are likely to dictate the speed and scope of engagement, and trade is likely to remain a political battleground for the foreseeable future, the author notes. To access the paper, click [here](#).

FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS: IMPACT ON US TRADE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR US TRADE POLICY. By William H. Cooper for the Congressional Research Service (June 2012). This paper, prepared for the United States Congress, examines recent developments in US trade policy and the role of free trade agreements (FTAs) in US foreign policy. The paper provides an overview of the history of FTAs in the US, followed by an analysis of the economic impact of FTAs and their implications for international relations and US national interests. To access the paper, click [here](#).

BRAZIL: COMPETITIVE FACTORS AFFECTING US AND BRAZILIAN

AGRICULTURAL SALES IN SELECTED THIRD COUNTRY MARKETS. Prepared by the US International Trade Commission (April 2012). This report describes and analyses competitive factors in Brazil affecting US and Brazilian sales of agricultural goods, including grains, soybeans, and meats, in third-country markets. It provides an overview of Brazil's agricultural imports, exports, consumption, and production during 2006–11; an overview of Brazilian government programmes and regulations relating to agricultural production and exports; an analysis of the growth of Brazilian agribusiness firms and their impact on global supply chains; a description of competitive factors affecting Brazil's agricultural sector; and special focus chapters surveying the soybean, grains, poultry, beef, and pork sectors, with an emphasis on important third-country markets where US and Brazilian exports directly compete. To access the report, click [here](#).